

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1 1. (Currently Amended) A financial services outsourcing method for facilitating a direct  
2 service provider's management of human resources for providing financial services to  
3 numerous clients, the financial services being outsourced to an outsourcing group abroad,  
4 the method comprising:

5 |       prioritizing tax returns for outsourcing, wherein a tax return with a lower priority  
6 | is outsourced before a tax return with a higher priority is outsourced;

7       for plural respective direct services providers, loading, onto a remotely accessible  
8 part of a common host server located in a given country, client specific financial files and  
9 corresponding reference materials, the host server providing access to a remote computer  
10 client of information concerning the client specific financial files and corresponding  
11 reference materials;

12       retaining outsourced personnel to perform tax return preparation services for  
13 clients of the direct service providers during a tax season in a given year and to perform  
14 other financial service projects for the clients of the direct service providers during a  
15 different season of the given year, the outsourced personnel preparing the tax returns and  
16 performing the other financial service projects while in an outsource country different  
17 from the given country;

18       providing the outsourced personnel limited access to the server;

19       the outsourced personnel performing the tax return preparation services during the  
20 tax season in the given year and performing the financial service projects during a  
21 different season of the given year through a remote limited access client located in the  
22 outsource country; and

23       monitoring and reporting the status of the tax return preparation and of the other  
24 financial service projects.

1 2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the tax return preparation  
2 services comprise individual tax return preparation services.

1 3. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the tax returns and other financial  
2 services are outsourced through an intermediary firm to the outsourced personnel.

1 4. (Original) The method according to claim 3, wherein the other financial service  
2 projects comprise bookkeeping projects.

1 5. (Original) The method according to claim 3, further comprising the intermediary  
2 service firm interacting with the outsourced personnel through use of a servicing  
3 computer system, and interacting with the plural direct service providers through use of  
4 the servicing computer system.

1 6. (Original) The method according to claim 3, wherein the direct service providers  
2 comprise accounting firms.

1 7. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the host server provides limited  
2 screen shot access to the remote client computer of information concerning the client  
3 specific financial files and corresponding reference materials.

1 8. (Original) The method according to claim 7, wherein the host server comprises a  
2 CITRIX server.

1 9. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein the host server  
2 provides limited screen shot access to the remote client computer of information  
3 concerning the client specific financial files and corresponding reference materials.

1 10. (Original) The method according to claim 9, wherein the host server comprises a  
2 CITRIX server.

1 11. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the host server comprises an  
2 ASP server running tax software for use by plural independent direct service providers  
3 provided with access to the ASP server.

12. (Original) The method according to claim 4, wherein the host server comprises an ASP server running tax software for use by plural independent direct service providers provided with access to the ASP server.

13. – 30. (Cancelled)

31. (Currently Amended) A financial services outsourcing method for facilitating a direct service provider's management of financial services to numerous clients, the financial services being outsourced to an outsourcing group abroad, the method comprising:

prioritizing tax returns for outsourcing, wherein a tax return with a lower priority is outsourced before a tax return with a higher priority is outsourced;

for plural respective direct service providers, loading, onto a remotely accessible part of a common host server located in a given country, client specific financial files and corresponding reference materials, the host server providing access to a remote computer client of information concerning the client specific financial files and the corresponding reference materials;

retaining outsourced personnel ~~outside the given country~~ to perform tax return preparation services for clients of the direct service providers during a tax season;

monitoring the work time of the retained personnel; and

determining when the retained personnel are underutilized.

32. (Currently Amended) A financial services outsourcing method for facilitating a direct service provider's outsourcing of financial services for numerous ultimate clients, the financial services being outsourced to an outsourcing group abroad, the method comprising:

prioritizing tax returns for outsourcing, wherein a tax return with a lower priority is outsourced before a tax return with a higher priority is outsourced;

for plural respective direct services providers, loading, onto a remotely accessible part of a common host server located in the United States, client specific financial files and corresponding reference materials, the host server providing access to a remote

10 computer client of information concerning the client specific financial files and  
11 corresponding reference materials;  
12 retaining outsourced personnel to perform financial service projects for respective  
13 clients of the financial services firms, the outsourced personnel performing the financial  
14 service projects while located outside the United States;  
15 providing the outsourced personnel limited access to the server;  
16 the outsourced personnel performing the financial service projects through a  
17 remote limited access client located outside the United States connected to the host  
18 server; and  
19 monitoring and reporting the status of the financial service projects.

1 33. (Cancelled)

1 34. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

2 | prioritizing tax returns for outsourcing, wherein a tax return with a lower priority  
3 | is outsourced before a tax return with a higher priority is outsourced;

4 retaining outsourced personnel to prepare the tax returns prioritized for  
5 outsourcing;

6 providing tax software and tax files to the outsourced personnel;

7 monitoring work time of the outsourced personnel;

8 annotating, by the outsourced personnel, the tax returns prioritized for  
9 outsourcing; and

10 completing, by the outsourced personnel, the tax returns prioritized for  
11 | outsourcing utilizing the tax software and tax files that are implemented on a computer.

1 35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 further comprising:

2 interviewing one or more tax filers; and

3 obtaining information from the one or more tax filers.

1 36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 wherein the information further  
2 comprises:

3 prior year return information; and  
4 supporting documentation of the prior year return information.

1 37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 further comprising:  
2 assigning, to an individual preparer of the outsourced personnel, one or more tax  
3 returns of the tax returns prioritized for outsourcing;  
4 annotating, by the individual preparer, each of the one or more tax returns  
5 assigned to the individual preparer; and  
6 completing, by the individual preparer, each of the one or more tax returns  
7 assigned to the individual preparer.

1 38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 further comprising:  
2 assigning, at a first local time, the tax returns prioritized for outsourcing, the first  
3 local time corresponding to an evening time in the United States; and  
4 completing, before a second local time, the tax returns prioritized for outsourcing,  
5 the second local time corresponding to the first morning time in the United States after  
6 the evening time in the United States.

1 39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 further comprising:  
2 reviewing, by a tax department or by a project manager, the completed tax returns  
3 prioritized for outsourcing.

1 40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 further comprising:  
2 generating a list of questions, the list of questions comprising missing  
3 information, the missing information required to complete a tax return of the tax returns  
4 prioritized for outsourcing.

1 41. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:  
2 obtaining, by a firm, information concerning a tax filer;  
3 logging, by the firm, the information concerning the tax filer into an outsourcing  
4 computer system;

outsourcing, by the firm, a preparation of a tax return of the tax filer to a tax return preparer;  
providing, by the outsourcing computer system, to the tax return preparer, access to the information concerning the tax filer;  
starting, by the tax return preparer, the preparation of the tax return;  
reviewing, by the tax return preparer, the information concerning the tax filer;  
imputing, by the tax return preparer, data into the outsourcing computer system, the data relating to the tax return;  
identifying, by the tax return preparer, missing information, the missing information required to prepare the tax return; and  
in response to identifying missing information:  
    (i) generating, by the tax return preparer, a list of questions, the list of questions for supplying the missing information;  
    (ii) sending the list of questions to the firm;  
    (iii) contacting, by the firm, the tax filer to address the list of questions;  
    (iv) transmitting, by the firm, the missing information to the tax return preparer; and  
    (v) completing, by the tax return preparer, the preparation of the tax return.

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 wherein the contacting of the tax filer is outsourced.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 wherein the transmitting of the missing information to the tax return preparer occurs by a computer network.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 wherein the outsourcing of the tax return is determined by prioritizing of rates and margins.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 further comprising outsourcing of bookkeeping of the information concerning the tax filer.

1 46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 further comprising monitoring work  
2 time of the tax preparer.

1 47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 further comprising instructing the tax  
2 preparer to perform other tasks, the other tasks not related to preparing the tax return.

1 48. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

2 | a plurality of tax returns, the tax returns prioritized for outsourcing, wherein a tax  
3 | return with a lower priority is outsourced before a tax return with a higher priority is  
4 | outsourced;

5 | outsourced personnel, the outsourced personnel for preparing the tax returns;

6 | tax software and tax files, the tax software and files for the outsourced personal to  
7 complete the tax returns;

8 | information, the information concerning one or more tax filers of each of the tax  
9 returns; and

10 | an outsourcing computer system, the outsourcing computer system for storing the  
11 information and providing the information to the outsourced personnel.

1 49. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the lower priority tax return is a tax return  
2 with a smaller price than that of the higher priority tax return with a larger price.

1 50. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein a tax return with a lower priority is a tax  
2 return for an individual tax filer.

1 51. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the higher priority tax return is a tax return  
2 with a higher price than that of the lower priority tax return with a smaller price.

1 52. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein a tax return with a higher priority is a tax  
2 return for a corporation.